

Old Tennent Church  
Englishtown, Monmouth County, New Jersey  
TENNENT

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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Old Tennent Church  
~~Englishtown~~, Monmouth County, New Jersey  
TENNENT

Owner: Trustees of Old Tennent Church

Date of Erection: 1751

Architect:

Builder: Chief Carpenter John Davies

Present Condition: Very good

Number of Stories: One with gallery

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - white cedar  
shingles

Interior walls - wainscot and  
siding

Floors - wood

Roof - slate over white cedar  
shingles

Historical Data:

Old Tennent stands for a church which has more than once changed its title or designating name. Its predecessor was Old Scots Meeting House, which had been built in 1692 and stood several miles north of the present church. The church was incorporated by a charter granted January 21, 1749 by King George II and endorsed by Governor Belcher. About this time the seal of the church with the words "Religious Liberty" was adopted; this is said to be the oldest known seal of

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any American Presbyterian Church. After the Revolution, 1787, a new corporate title was chosen- "The Trustees of the First Presbyterian Congregation in Freehold in the County of Monmouth." In 1859 the name of the church was changed by act of legislature to the First Presbyterian Church of the County of Monmouth. In memory of John and William Tennent the name of the church was changed to Old Tennent in 1920.

In 1731 the congregation moved from Old Scots and built a second church on the site of the present structure; this was the first church on White Hill (so-called because of the numerous White Oaks found there). The present church was built in 1751 during the pastorship of the famous William Tennent. This church was sixty feet long and forty feet wide and seated four hundred people; the frame was of white oak, sheathed with long cedar shingles, with a high steep pitch roof surmounted by a neat tower after the pattern of Colonial days. Actually the church was not completely finished until 1753 as the iron bar fastenings of the doors are stamped 1753.

Ancestral tradition says William Redford Craig, a carpenter, built the neat and unique pulpit as his contribution toward the erection and furnishing of the church.

The Battle of Monmouth was fought a little over a mile south-east of the present church on June 28, 1778. There is a good degree of authenticity to the tradition that the church was used as a hospital for wounded soldiers and that

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musket balls pierced its sides during the battle. Colonel Henry Mockton, commanding second battalion British Grenadiers, was killed in this battle and was buried near the south-west corner of the Church.

**Bibliography:**

A Brochure on Old Tennent  
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Symmes, F. R. History of The Old  
Tennent Church Cranbury, 1904

Field Books and Drawings of Survey

Walter E. Rutt  
Supervising Historian

Approved:

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District Officer

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